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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/19/2018

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SUBJECT: MGLBO1: LEBANON MONITORING GROUP SITUATION

REPORT NO. 20

CLASSIFIED BY: DMURRAY, SENIOR WATCH OFFICER,  
S/ES-O, REASON 1.4 (B) AND (D)

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DOHA TALKS BOGGED DOWN  
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¶1. (SBU) Media report the Hizballah-led opposition and government disagree on how to proceed with negotiations. Negotiators suspended discussions on the electoral law in order to focus first on electing a president, but Hizballah presented a counter proposal to negotiate on cabinet formation and review the electoral law prior to a presidential vote. Embassy Beirut reports PM Siniora considers Hizballah's maneuver an attempt to obstruct the negotiations. (Ops/Embassy Beirut e-mail, AP)

¶2. (SBU) Despite earlier threats by the Future Party to pull out of negotiations, March 14 members said talks will continue if there is no breakthrough even after the planned departure of Arab League ministers May 20. (Ops/Embassy Beirut e-mail)

¶3. (SBU) Qatari PM Jassim reportedly is "furious" with Parliamentary Speaker Berri's proposal for a "neutral" government that would not include March 14 or the Hizballah-backed opposition, which was not part of the Arab League initiative. Jassim is pressing his counterparts in Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and

Jordan to keep their promises to help facilitate a resolution. (Ops/Embassy Beirut e-mail)

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EMBASSY REVIEWS AIRPORT SECURITY  
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¶4. (S) In an initial assessment of security operations at Beirut International Airport (BIA), Embassy Beirut notes operations appear normal. Post will continue to review security at BIA following the outcome of the Doha Dialogue before lifting restrictions on the travel of USG personnel through the airport. (Ops/Embassy Beirut telcon)

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NON-IMMIGRANT VISA PROCESSING RESUMES  
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¶5. (SBU) Embassy Beirut reports no calls from concerned AmCits. (Ops/Embassy Beirut telcon)

¶6. (U) Minimize considered.

RICE